

Coffee Shop & Cafe Checklists

Goods-In · Opening · Espresso Bar · Brewed Coffee · Pastry Display · Closing · Weekly Checks

Check Deliveries In

Accept good stock and store it to rotate.

CHECK THE DELIVERY

- ☐ **Check the temperature of milk and dairy alternatives when they arrive (cold holding, at or below 5°C / 41°F).**
Cold holding keeps milk safe until staff use it.
- ☐ **Check the roast date on every bag of beans.**
Fresh beans give better flavor.
- ☐ **Check the use-by date on every bottle of syrup.**
An expired syrup can taste off and spoil a drink.
- ☐ **Reject any delivery with damaged or leaking packaging.**
Damaged packaging can mean the product inside is unsafe.

ROTATE STOCK SO THE OLDEST GOES FIRST (FIFO)

- ☐ **Put new milk and dairy alternatives behind older stock, so the oldest sells first.**
FIFO stops stock from going out of date before staff use it.
- ☐ **Write the delivery date on every new bag of beans.**
A clear date lets staff use the oldest beans first.
- ☐ **Move opened syrup bottles to the front of the shelf.**
Staff should use an open bottle before they open a new one.

Open the Bar

Warm up the machine and set up for a safe shift.

GET THE ESPRESSO MACHINE READY

- ☐ **Turn on the espresso machine and let it warm up to temperature.**
A cold machine pulls a weak, uneven shot.
- ☐ **Check the water filter is not due for a change.**
A worn filter changes the water taste and can damage the machine.
- ☐ **Dial in the grinder and set the dose (the amount of ground coffee) for the day.**
The grinder drifts overnight, so it needs resetting each morning.
- ☐ **Pull a test shot and taste it before you serve any customer.**
Tasting confirms the shot is balanced before you sell it.

SET UP FOR A SAFE SHIFT

- ☐ **Stock the handwash station with soap, hot water, and paper towels.**
Staff need a working handwash station to keep drinks safe.
- ☐ **Check that staff wash their hands before they start work.**
Handwashing at the start of a shift stops germs moving onto food and drink.
- ☐ **Mix fresh sanitizer for wipe cloths and check it is at the right strength (ppm).**
Weak sanitizer will not kill germs, and strong sanitizer can be unsafe on cloths.
- ☐ **Ask every staff member about illness before their shift starts.**
A sick staff member can pass illness to customers through food and drink.

Run the Espresso Bar

Keep every shot and every jug of milk to standard.

PULL A CONSISTENT SHOT

- ☐ **Dose and tamp (press down the ground coffee) every shot to the set amount.**
A consistent dose and tamp keep the shot the same every time.
- ☐ **Time every shot to the set window.**
Shot time affects whether the espresso tastes balanced or bitter.

- ☐ **Check shot quality through the whole shift, not only when you open.**
Grind and dose can drift as the day goes on.

HANDLE MILK AND THE STEAM WAND

- ☐ **Purge (run water through the tip) and wipe the steam wand before you steam milk.**
Purging clears old milk from the tip before it touches fresh milk.
- ☐ **Purge and wipe the steam wand again right after you steam milk.**
Dried milk on the wand grows bacteria and blocks the steam holes.
- ☐ **Keep milk cold in the fridge until you need it.**
Warm milk spoils fast and does not steam well.
- ☐ **Wash milk jugs between uses.**
A dirty jug can taint the next drink.

Brew Filter Coffee

Brew to the right ratio and keep the equipment clean.

BREW TO STANDARD

- ☐ **Use the set brew ratio (the amount of coffee to water) for every batch.**
The right ratio stops the coffee tasting weak or bitter.
- ☐ **Note the time you brew each batch.**
You need the brew time to know when to dump it.
- ☐ **Dump brewed coffee once it passes its holding time.**
Coffee held too long turns bitter and stale.

CLEAN THE BREW EQUIPMENT

- ☐ **Rinse the brewer basket between batches.**
Old grounds left in the basket taint the next brew.
- ☐ **Clean the batch brewer and urn.**
Leftover coffee oils build up and turn rancid.

Check the Pastry and Food Display

For shops that serve food: label, flag allergens, and keep items cold.

CHECK THE DISPLAY

- ☐ **Date-label every item you put in the display.**
A date label lets staff and customers know what is still safe.
- ☐ **Check allergen information is correct and visible for every item.**
Wrong allergen information can cause a serious reaction in a customer.
- ☐ **Check the display case keeps chilled items cold (cold holding).**
Cold holding slows bacteria growth in food that is ready to eat.
- ☐ **Remove any item that is past its date from the display.**
Out-of-date food is not safe to sell.

KEEP THE DISPLAY FULL AND SELLING

- ☐ **Fill the display for the serving period ahead, and top it up as items sell.**
A full case keeps items visible and gets short-dated stock sold before it must be dumped.
- ☐ **Rotate cakes and pastries so the oldest sells first (FIFO).**
FIFO stops items reaching their date before they sell.
- ☐ **Move short-dated items to the front and sell them before they pass their date.**
Selling near-date stock recovers cash instead of dumping it as waste.

Close the Bar

Clean the machine, secure cash, and lock up.

CLEAN THE ESPRESSO MACHINE

- ☐ **Backflush the espresso machine with detergent (send cleaner back through the machine to clear oil buildup).**
Backflushing removes coffee oils that build up inside the machine.
- ☐ **Empty the knock box and soak the removable parts.**
Soaking loosens dried coffee grounds that a wipe alone will not remove.
- ☐ **Deep-clean the steam wand.**
A daily deep clean removes milk residue the quick wipe misses.

FINISH THE CLOSE

- ☐ **Clean the batch brewer and urn for the next day.**
A clean brewer stops old coffee oils tainting tomorrow's first batch.
- ☐ **Sanitize every work surface.**
Sanitizing overnight lowers the risk of contamination before the next shift.
- ☐ **Count the cash drawer and log any difference.**
Counting cash catches an error or a loss early.
- ☐ **Lock up and secure the shop.**
Securing the shop protects stock, cash, and equipment overnight.

Weekly Equipment and Safety Checks

Deep-clean the bar and check safety once a week, not daily.

DEEP-CLEAN THE EQUIPMENT

- ☐ **Descale the espresso machine (remove mineral buildup with a descaling solution) on the set schedule.**
Mineral buildup clogs the machine and changes how it heats water.
- ☐ **Check the grinder burrs (the plates that grind the beans) for wear, and clean them.**
Worn or dirty burrs grind unevenly and make poor-tasting coffee.
- ☐ **Deep-clean the whole bar area, including under and behind equipment.**
A deeper clean catches spills and buildup the daily clean misses.

WEEKLY SAFETY CHECKS

- ☐ **Do a full pest check of the whole shop.**
A weekly check catches pest activity before it becomes a bigger problem.
- ☐ **Calibrate every thermometer used in the shop.**
An inaccurate thermometer can hide an unsafe temperature.